

# Press Release



John Hoeven, Governor  
Douglass A. Prchal, Director

1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 3  
Bismarck, ND 58503-0649

Phone 701-328-5357  
Fax 701-328-5363

E-mail [parkrec@state.nd.us](mailto:parkrec@state.nd.us)  
[www.NDparks.com](http://www.NDparks.com)

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*For more information, contact*

*Chris Milford, Star Party Chairman*

*Ph: 218-791-7502*

*<http://www.und.edu/org/nsas/NDSP2005>*

*[ndsp05@hotmail.com](mailto:ndsp05@hotmail.com)*

## ***Amateur Star Gazers Meet for 3rd annual North Dakota Star Party at Cross Ranch State Park***

Washburn, ND – June 3-5, 2005: This will be the third year that amateur astronomers from around the state have invited the world to Cross Ranch State Park and the North Dakota Star Party. Conceived in 2003, the event brings together amateur astronomers from around the state and across the country for three days of astronomy, guest speakers, telescopes and activities.

The Star Party, a concept where astronomy buffs gather with interested public to share the night sky and the latest information concerning current space activity. This year guest speakers sharing their expertise include National Air and Space Museum Planetary Scientist, Dr. Jim Zimbleman. Zimbleman uses data returned by the twin Mars rovers to uncover the past geology of Mars. Another guest speaker is involved in getting everyday people excited about planetary science. Elizabeth Warner, an outreach person for the Deep Impact Amateur Observers Program, will share ways to become involved in studying comets. Also attending this year's Star Party are the authors of the popular geology guide, "The Geology of the Lewis and Clark Trail," Dr. John Hoganson and Dr. Edward Murphy. Hoganson works for the North Dakota Geological Survey (NDGS) as paleontologist and Murphy as the State Geologist.

The Star Party will include all-night viewing through several telescopes. The telescopes will be pointed towards the planets Jupiter and Saturn at night. During the day, people will look at the sun's huge solar flares and dark sunspots with special telescopes.

Register by visiting the North Dakota Star Party website, <http://www.und.edu/org/nsas/NDSP2005>, or by calling Chris Milford (218-791-7502).

Cross Ranch State Park is located 35 miles north of Bismarck, near Washburn along the Missouri River. Day activities will include visits to nearby historic locations. This is a family friendly event intended to allow anyone interested in astronomy to learn a little more about the hobby.

*Play in our backyard!*